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The American Crisis

Political Idealism and the Cold War

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"I have seen the best
minds of my generation..."

A VERY large number of the ablest minds in the country, if concerned at all with defense and foreign policy, work for the Air Force's Rand Corporation, the Army's Operations Research Office at Johns Hopkins, or in the CIA. In some universities, the political science department has close personal and professional ties with such agencies. So, too, within each of the Armed Services and the AEC there are exceptionally intelligent men whose full-time job it is to find holes in any possibility of a test ban or other rapprochement with the Russians. They are in the business of manufacturing objections, much as any military clique in any country can manufacture incidents. Take, for example, the fantastic idea, de-

veloped in Edward Teller's Livermore Laboratory, that deep holes might be dug in salt mines and bombs exploded therein without anybody's noticing—a notion that is fantastic, not because the Russians couldn't do it, but because it would take a long time, require immense commotion of men and machines, and would therefore be very hard to keep secret, if not from us, then from the Russian people themselves. Moreover, there are numerous indications that the Soviet Union has little interest in testing small or "clean" nuclear weapons, and that many Soviet citizens have a better sense of the dangers of a spread of nuclear weapons than is often found on the American side.*

Once upon a time, the Navy in its own interest opposed reliance on massive retaliation, and its experts were therefore free to explore the dangers of this doctrine. But then, faced with a declining strategic role, the Navy traded doctrine for budget—reaping a harvest in big carriers and

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* There is also a certain disingenuousness in the arguments of some American experts that emphasize Soviet cheating rather than their own fears that Los Alamos will be disbanded if scientists and technicians cannot continue legitimate testing—these anxieties raise the possibility, never mentioned so far as we know in the press, that the Americans might also cheat.

atomic submarines—and joined the Air Force in alliance against the remaining Army men (such as Generals Ridgway, Gavin, and Taylor) whose recurrent protests have usually led to their leaving the intra-service battlefield altogether. Today, only a few amateurs, some university professors, and a small group of liberal Congressmen are free to explore the risks of current military policy and the foreign policy to which it leads.

HA! The authors of this essay are neither experts on defense nor on foreign policy. At the same time, we have had some experience in seeing the experts make mistakes by virtue of their expertise. This does not mean that amateurs are necessarily better than professionals; but until a serious effort is mobilized for peace, amateurs will probably have to be relied upon for new ideas in the field of defense and foreign policy.

AMONG the most important and interesting problems of education is that of exploring the means by which people can learn to make a proper judgment of expert opinion. One way is to become expert in a particular field oneself. Another approach is to gain some sense of the kind of perspective or style of perception that the experts use, as a basis for seeing what might be the possible limitations of their view in a given instance. Thus one can find experts privy to discussions concerning deterrence who talk about the American ability to "accept," let us say, ten or thirty million casualties—experts who are familiar with the post-World War II disaster studies but who fail to ask what sort of backwoods reactionaries would take over whatever would be left of America if our major urban centers were destroyed in a nuclear (or biological or other mass) war.

who? So, too, there are other men, intelligent enough to grasp some of the inherent weaknesses in the strategy of deterrence, who have speculated about an automatic deterrent, protected from the possibility

of human frailty on our side. One mechanism that has been proposed for achieving this is a cobalt bomb, aimed at all countries having nuclear power themselves and primed to go off without reference to a human chain of command the moment any nuclear weapon is fired at us. The argument for such a scheme is that if a potential enemy thinks that we, as human beings, might decide for some reason or other not to hit back (despite the fact that we are equipped to do so) then our deterrent, though still terrifying, loses its absolute value; therefore we must try to set up a system over which none of us has any control. This reasoning, logical as far as it goes, typically leaves other variables out of account altogether—like the fact that becoming the prisoners of our own mechanisms would intensify the dangerous feelings of helplessness which the policy of deterrence has already succeeded in producing. It would mean surrendering the hope that the human race can get control of the arms race—even though it has been argued that once the automatic cobalt bomb was known to exist, no one would tempt fate.

One further point about experts: they have fended off outsiders, including many intelligent Congressmen, by establishing as a condition of entering the debate on armaments a knowledge of highly technical matters (frequently "classified") and the possession of a polished rationality of the game-theory sort. Many of the traditional pacifist groups can make no headway in this situation—they are regarded, if not as un-American, then as all heart and no head. There are, however, a few fortunate exceptions among the experts: for example, George Kennan, whose life shows that it is possible to combine the knowledge of an expert with the sound sense of the amateur and the broadly educated human being.

The situation in Great Britain is much healthier in these respects. Stimulated in part by George Kennan's BBC lectures of a few years ago, an active discussion

has been taking place in England of alternatives to nuclear war, with the proposals ranging from unilateral disarmament to diplomatic maneuvers aimed at easing particular points of tension in the cold war, whether in China or in Germany. Last year, and again this year, many thousands of men and women marched from the Aldermaston atomic energy plant to London in a protest against the plans for nuclear war; a large fraction of the Labor party is opposed to the policy of deterrence, and the Conservative party also contains a significant number of political leaders who are capable of rising above nationalism. It is inconceivable, for instance, that the British equivalent of Lyndon Johnson would respond to something like the spy plane incident by backing his blundering government right or wrong.

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WHAT accounts for this difference between Britain and America? The problem of dealing with experts is the same in both countries, although in Britain—which is smaller and still partially aristocratic in nature—political leaders are less cut off than ours are from intellectuals, literary men, and scientists. It may be that people feel safer in this country because it is big and powerful and seemingly remote from the traditional areas of danger. This is an irrational feeling in the modern world of deterrence, since our fearful power and our weapons themselves become a lightning rod inviting attack; nevertheless the feeling does seem to exist. A Gallup poll in January roughly mirrored the results of a poll taken by Samuel Stouffer a few years ago: when people in a national cross-section are questioned about their worries a large proportion of them mention health and family troubles, and another fraction money troubles, but only one in fourteen allude to the international situation.* Yet half the Gallup sample also

thought that there would be another war before too long—a war that, as the general texture of their answers indicates, has very little reality for them. Mothers, for instance, said that they didn't want their sons to serve overseas—evidently still unaware, despite the headlines, that in effect there is no "overseas" in modern war.

Another, and related difference between this country and Britain, is that on the whole Americans have not suffered much from recent history. Whatever suffering the Second World War involved for a few was more than matched, for millions, by the fact that the war brought the great depression to an end. Besides, the war left a legacy of wild Keynesianism that continues in a new war economy to sustain prosperity: as Gerard Piel points out in the current issue of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, it is the war economy which during the last fifteen years has brought a full third of the population into relative affluence.

There is still another difference which Edward Shils has noted in his book, *The Torment of Secrecy*. The British, protecting their privacy better, fear spies, secrets, and invaders less than we do, and have never been as hysterical about Communism. Even after the Klaus Fuchs case, they in effect decided that they would rather risk losing a few secrets to a few spies than turn the country upside down in the alleged hope of flushing all enemy agents out. One result is that the ex-Communists in Britain are not nearly so eager to prove their virtue as the ex-Communists in this country—and it is perhaps the ex-Communists in this country who above all justify Silone's remark that the next war would be fought between the Communists and the ex-Communists.

But perhaps a deeper difference between us and the British lies in the fact that American men seem constantly pursued by the fear of unmanliness, and therefore feel the need to present themselves as hard and realistic. This way of being realistic may have nothing to do

* Stouffer, *Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties* (Doubleday, 1955). The Gallup poll is reported in *Look*, January 5, 1960.

if vulnerable (or, if
Kendin leaders are mad)

with reality. Often, "realism" becomes no more than the opposite of idealism, reasonableness, or morality. Many men of an older generation, having witnessed the excesses to which sentimentality and self-righteousness can take us, and completely sure of their own morality and dedication, are sometimes unwitting heralds for what is only a seemingly similar realism in others, a pseudo-realism that springs from fear about masculinity. The British seem less obsessed than we are on this score. Nor do they have a proponent of tragic realism so brilliant as Reinhold Niebuhr. What produces the difference? What is the aim which in America has been distorted into a need to feel tough?

ONE possibility is that for those to whom being American means being a pioneer—a trail-blazer and producer—the lack of new frontiers creates a fear (felt within and reinforced from outside) that the country is going soft. Perhaps, having escaped the bombing and much of the suffering of the Second World War, many Americans have never established their courage in their own eyes, and this may be another reason why the fears of being "soft on Communism" or just soft, are far stronger here than in Great Britain.* To recognize and admit the enormous dangers that grow every day the cold war continues would feel like weakness to these people; it would seem but another step leading to a retreat from the heroic stand against nature, a stand that makes sense when, in order to survive physically, man must fight, but which now becomes merely a "posture"—a term that is increasingly and symptomatically coming into use in describing American policy (along with the somewhat analogous word, "position"). This "posture" which so many people insist upon become self-destructive in a world of fantastically rapid change, where survival depends on flexibility and on willingness to accept some responsibility for what is happening in the world as a whole.

Such people have been brought up to feel that worthwhile national action is to be defined mainly in terms of military or semi-military attacks on obstacles, either physical or human. They view with horror their countrymen who, captured by the ideology of consumption, have none of the spartan virtues, and in fact seem drones heralding the collapse of the state. A number of these men are the American analogues of Tory patricians (or in some cases, would-be patricians) who since Theodore Roosevelt's day have seen war and preparation for war as the condition of national health.† Having no goals for America in its own terms and (like most of us) more attuned to what they despise in their countrymen than to what they hope for, they cannot help being preoccupied with the Communists as a possible barbarian threat (often failing to realize how necessary we in turn are in the Soviet Union as a model for emulation, frequently for our worst Victorian excesses). So much, in fact, do these Americans depend on frightening their own countrymen with the not entirely fanciful bogeymen of a Soviet take-over, and so much do they rely on generating and maintaining a mood of crisis, that we ourselves are

* Obviously, we are not here proposing that the British lack problems of their own, including those in the area of masculinity and sex! But British society does provide people with a structure against which to rebel and within which to define oneself; correspondingly, even some ex-Communists can feel at home a bit more readily there than in this country, without having to rush into a new dogmatism. However, by the same token, certain utopian possibilities in America, presented by abundance and the absence of class conflict, are less available in Britain.

† Senator Kennedy was quite in the patrician tradition when he concluded a Senate speech, "An Investment for Peace," of February 29, by saying, "I urge that this Congress, before the President departs for the summit, demonstrate conclusively that we are removing those doubts [about the missile gap and like weaponry] and that we are prepared to pay the full cost necessary to insure peace. Let us remember what Gibbon said of the Romans: 'They kept the peace—by a constant preparation for war; and by making clear to their neighbors that they are as little disposed to offer as to endure injury.'"

Washington

troubled lest the title and themes of this paper, too hurriedly read, add to the image of menace, when our own spirit, though no less critical, looks further and more hopefully ahead. It is one of the many ironies of the current situation that people who fear the missile gap (a presently unrealistic fear, as the U-2 flights have helped to show) and those like ourselves who fear the arms race as the gravest danger have virtually cancelled each other out, thus creating a climate of middle complacency and fringe hysteria.

THESE contradictory images of our hardness and of our softness cannot help but cloud the vision of those military men and political leaders who are charged with the national defense. Because they fear softness, they seek to maintain a climate in which only hardness can thrive—so much so that perhaps a general is best able to move toward peace, since only a general is immune to accusations of softness. Correspondingly, many people who have different goals in mind seek to hitch them to the defense star, with the result that something so magnanimous in conception as the Marshall Plan becomes from the very start a cold war weapon, and finds a good deal of its legacy in propping up or even creating military regimes in places like Pakistan whose officials can persuade us that they are real, made-to-order anti-Communists.

Obviously, it is not so hard to be anti-Communist if that is the way to build up one's military faction in a still emerging nation. But as the cold war continues, it becomes increasingly difficult for decent Americans, humane enough to prefer peace to an egocentric national honor, to be outspokenly and genuinely anti-Communist. For example, we had very mixed feelings about the idealistic and dedicated Americans, some of them our colleagues, who last summer went to Vienna and set up shop to oppose the propaganda of the Communist Youth Festival. We had mis-

givings because it was impossible to escape the fact that, whatever their personal motives, these students became, in effect, emissaries of our State Department and our national cold war line.

And the problem is equally grave for the radical opposition. As Margaret Mead observed in an address last year, a student in this country a generation ago who had radical ideas had the advantage of being powerless: of being on the side of a future which did not yet exist. Today, however, such a student may find that his particular idea happens at the moment also to be part of the Communist party line, in which case he is not in alliance with a non-existent and therefore uncontaminated future, but with an extremely menacing, and totally unwelcome power. On the reverse side, someone like Pasternak, or many young Polish writers who are acclaimed in this country, may feel themselves betrayed by their very courage and virtue. Thus, as long as the cold war goes on, we lack an uncorrupted political debate.

Under such conditions, it is not surprising that so many people prefer to withdraw from the field altogether. Although they are willing to countenance arms spending, a large number of Americans cannot bring themselves to contemplate the true horror of war, and so they simply go to sleep when they are asked to "wake up" to the dangers that face them. They have learned that the thing to do with anxiety (whether based on real danger or not) is to rid oneself of it through drink, drugs, or canned fantasies.

There are other Americans, however, whose anxiety and escape take more productive forms. Like many of the Soviet intelligentsia who hate the system but feel powerless to change it, certain American elite groups have chosen the road of "inner emigration," retreating from social responsibilities into, at best, a concern with their immediate surroundings, family, and friends. Though such people are often aroused by issues like education, urban

renewal, or mental health, they are estranged from the system because it seems to them run for political motives in the narrowest rather than in the best sense. Unlike the escapist security seekers, they are not alienated from themselves as human beings, yet the fact that they remain without political purpose beyond their small civic circles limits their vision and hence their growth. It is for this reason that they may today be ready to give enthusiastic support to a far-reaching idealistic political movement that will provide them with a way of reasserting their faith in democracy.

Still others who are intelligent enough to be concerned with the world have escaped into cynicism, considering the system as corrupt and finding a sense of purpose in expertise, even if this means selling themselves to the highest bidder. Such people, amorally working for personal gain within the system, have in fact supported many of its worst elements. But perhaps "support" is too strong a word, for one often finds in talking to them that they have a streak of buried idealism hidden as much from themselves as from others by this mask of cynicism. Whereas the hypocrisy of the Victorians consisted of concealing mean motives under noble rhetoric, our own hypocrisy often conceals a cankered decency beneath a cloak of *Realpolitik*. Sometimes the decency manifests itself only with family and intimate relations, sometimes in the restlessness that underlies the purposive exterior, sometimes merely in the aggressive defense that is put up by these people against any suggestion that their public and private selves need not always remain so completely at odds.

WHETHER in foreign policy, or in personal life, Americans appear today to suffer from an inadequate formulation of their alternatives. It has become extremely common among the well-educated to denounce "blind conformity" and "mass society," often symbolized by

such minor irritants as tail-fins, TV, or gray-flannel suits. But the only alternatives many people see to the organization man is the nostalgic image of the cowboy or the rebellious artist; hard-shelled individualism and a rejection of human solidarity are mistaken as signs of strength and independence. Even the best students in our colleges tend to assume that they must eventually make their peace with "the system"—which they see as even more monolithic than in fact it is—and they will then often become vicarious fellow-travelers of the Beats whose passive and almost entirely non-progressive defiance serves to publicize a private helplessness.

Students in recent years have frequently said that helplessness is realistic: "What can you do about nuclear war?" Searching for a guarantee that life never provides, a guarantee not only that action will be effective but that all its consequences will be good, such young people never get started and therefore never gain the realistic political experience necessary to make them less helpless. Again, there is a tendency to jump to extreme alternatives: either total control of the total weapons, or total inaction.

The sit-in strikes in the South and their support in the North may be the first sign of a change in these attitudes, for they have shown how much can be done even by relatively powerless and unorganized students, and perhaps the same kind of political activity will spread into other areas such as concern about South Africa, about foreign policy in general, and about nuclear war. In fact, the speed with which things can change is an ever repeated lesson of history; and at the very moment when the system appears impregnable to the realist, it often turns out to be vulnerable to the quixotic. Of course, we are not saying that "where there's a will, there is always a way," but we are saying that everyone today has been over-sold on cultural and historical determinism—in which, incidentally, there may be self-serving elements, since determinism allows

us publicly to accept the existing political structure while we privately deplore conformity, perhaps even showing by minor and irrelevant rebellions like sexual promiscuity or wearing a beard that we are rebels at heart.

IF WE see only two choices in our personal behavior, such as conformity as against individualism, or adjustment as against neurotic loneliness, then it is likely that a similar dichotomizing tendency will capture our political life. Thus, the American is asked to choose between democracy and communism, when in fact neither system is monolithic, and both have many things—literally things—in common, in contrast with the less industrialized and bureaucratized parts of the world. As already implied, our relationship with Russia is similar to that of a big brother who is obsessed with the fear that his little brother will overtake him, and this overconcern keeps us, the older brother, from realizing our unique potentialities. In this case, the sibling rivalry runs both ways, for the Russians gear their system to show that they are as good or better than we in those areas we most prize—technology, sports, and education. The tragedy is not only that because of our obsession we are rejecting utopian possibilities and ignoring more pressing problems (at the lowest level the much greater threat of Red China) but also that we are missing a chance to provide a better goal for Soviet growth. We may hope that the Russians will get rich enough to be preoccupied by the problem of national purpose which currently plagues us; and in the American-like desires of the Soviet elite, we find signs of this development. But perhaps if we were to show that our system can be mobilized to produce a better life, drawing its meaning from activity rather than from consumption *per se* or from national might, we would eventually shift the emphasis of Soviet emulation.

In fairness it should be added that a surrender to apocalyptic alternatives is

sometimes found on the more humane side of current American debates concerning deterrence. It would be surprising if this were not the case, for the dominant ways of perceiving in a culture generally turn up, sometimes in a disguised form, in the very models of opposing such ways. Thus, there are some pacifists, among the many different schools of pacifist thought, who see the present situation as demanding either preparation for total destruction or a complete cessation of all military measures through unilateral action. We believe that if the world survives these next critical years and becomes less uncivilized, we shall move away from the anarchy of nationalism, reducing arms to the level of police forces and handling as imaginatively as we can the problem of coping with despotic governments—in part by the remarkable invention of Gandhian non-violent resistance, a milder and far more difficult political weapon than trading blow for blow. Naturally, it is hard to see how the transition from the fully armed nation-state to the fully disarmed nation-state can be accomplished. *easy!* It is easier to envisage a diplomatic give-and-take between ourselves and the Soviet Union that (without complete disarmament) would settle outstanding conflicts of interest in Europe and Asia—even though attempts at such a settlement would encounter the opposition of Adenauer and Ulbricht, Chiang and Mao, American Cold Warriors and their Stalinist opposite numbers in Russia. Efforts at disarmament not coupled with diplomatic moves to settle the cold war will make Americans as uneasy as high-flying spy planes must make the Russian people, and hence may boomerang. In our judgment, one must work simultaneously on both fronts, diplomacy and disarmament, keeping in mind the long-run pacifist goal of a world in which conflict is settled without weapons and war.

What we wish to emphasize here, however, is not the details of the various positions, but rather the way in which the

American style of thinking has suffered from a tendency to oversimplify alternatives and to leap always to absolute positions. It is wrong to insist that one must choose between conformity and individualism, slavery or freedom, absolute toughness or unilateral disarmament. Our need to plan distant as well as short-run goals, to work out the full implications of alternative actions, is confused with simplistic self-definitions, and thus we militate against graduated approaches. Where the arms race is concerned, a graduated approach would start with a definition of the goal as disarmament and would continue with a step-by-step attempt to find ways of overcoming our fears on the one hand and Russia's distrust of inspectors on the other. A good illustration of the kind of imaginative plan that is needed is Leo Szilard's idea of an inspection game.* Recognizing the reality both of our fear of secret Soviet operations (and of the unreliability of any government's promise, including our own) and theirs of foreigners poking around, Szilard would allow inspection in detail any time that either party suspected clandestine atomic activity or decided that a tremor might not merely be an earthquake. However, if we turned out to be wrong we would have to pay the Soviets a huge indemnity and vice versa. The goal of such a game is greater trust through experience rather than an idea of security through armaments which suggests either a statuesque posture or a swaddled, unrealistic existence, perhaps lived underground in concrete shelters.

How does one begin the effort to change this pattern of thinking about security through armament? Because different people in the United States are at different stages of alertness and health or flight and cynicism, the answer will vary depending on which group in the population one addresses.

When a man is being over-manipulated to the point where his very existence has become unreal, he cannot be "made" human by more and better manipulation from the "right" direction, by mere bombardment with pressures and appeals. It is this very habit of ignoring the human qualities of men in order to get them to run smoothly that has caused much of our trouble.

Manipulation "downward," from the elites to the public, inevitably intensifies apathy and saps the strength of an alert public just when it is most needed. Thus—to return to an earlier point—by a propaganda campaign which persuaded people to view the Marshall Plan as a semi-military stroke against Communism rather than as an idealistic and ultimately practical acknowledgment of our new world responsibility, we increased the chances of a quick acceptance of the program at the expense of setting a pattern in which all economic development of underdeveloped countries would carry the imprimatur of our particular sort of idealism. By reinforcing the ideology of cageyness, we have been killing the very quality in ourselves which might save us from a moral disintegration that armaments can never arrest.

However, while manipulation downward or sideways leads to dysfunctional precedents which narrow future alternatives, lobbying "upward" is necessary and in the best traditions of keeping our leaders responsible. Today, as free citizens, we need energetically to influence the military, industrial, political, and educational elites into letting go of their investments in the cold war and into working not only for a safer but for a better world. This might involve setting up programs for the economics of disarmament, as Seymour Melman says in a study in progress. For example, part of Raytheon might be deployed into a government-supported project for the renewal of downtown Boston, thereby insuring the managers that the cessation of arms stockpiling

* *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*, April 1960.

will not leave them and their industries holding the radio-active potato. Or, to take another example, programs might be developed for the retraining of officers of SAC and other agencies whose existence depends on the cold war. Some of these men can certainly be deployed into inspection for disarmament; but in a less bellicose climate, they will not find jobs with defense contractors, nor even perhaps as headmasters of military schools. Still, their organizational ability and their dedication should be useful.

Many people do not take even the small opportunities to lobby for human interests, encouraging elements of idealism in even the most cynical, and thereby supporting the faction of peacemakers in Washington and perhaps indirectly in the Kremlin, too. The paradox is that in an age when many feel so powerless a single irate letter can often have a totally unanticipated impact. With an elite like ours that is both divided and confused, a "grass roots" complaint about a TV show or a Congressional measure can, as often for worse as for better, show the fallacy of those who believe that there are no channels left for effective political action.

YET, if we get out of the immediate crisis, we shall still be faced with the underlying disorder in a society in which—partly as the result of its great past achievements—people feel there is plenty for all, but little joy in using the things we have made. In order to assuage the managerial fears, often less than conscious, that the end of the cold war would bring us face to face with a problem quite unlike that of 1945 (when the demand for consumer goods had not yet been fulfilled), we need a program which would provide alternatives both to spending for defense and spending for spending's sake.

For the Russians, a decrease in defense spending means the beginning of television and toasters for all, and perhaps a slight loosening of despotic controls. For us, much more is involved, and more dif-

ficult problems—those of "abundance for what?"* Indeed, no society has ever been in the American position before or anywhere near it, and thus the dream of plenty until our time has remained unsullied. We cannot look to the experience of other times and other countries for models for the American future. Neither can we discover much relevant wisdom in earlier prophets of abundance. Very few of these prophets foresaw the actual cornucopia of even so modestly efficient an industrial plant as ours (a plant which, if we were not so afraid of productivity or of controlling waste, would produce in a manner truly comparable to the myth of American efficiency).† For example, Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward*, which had an enormous impact on the Gilded Age, envisaged an industrial utopia whose amiable and genteel standard of living has long since been attained throughout a large American middle-income belt—though the inner peace and spaciousness that was supposed to go along with this prosperity has scarcely been approached. Even the most devoted apostles of capitalism in previous generations seldom foresaw that it would outrun their grandest hopes (though Schumpeter did grasp this)—while enemies of capitalism like Karl Marx, who acknowledged its power to surpass all earlier levels of production and consumption, never predicted its chastened managerial form nor indeed its bounteous exploitability. We are a generation who, prepared for Paradise Lost, are afraid that if we enter Paradise Regained, we shall deprive ourselves not merely of the incentive to produce but even of the incentive to live. We therefore resist such a predicament as a temptation of the devil, and in the process fail even to take the necessary steps, first toward

* We have drawn in what follows on Riesman, "Abundance for What?" *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientist*, Vol. XIV, No. 4 (1958), pages 135-139.

† This myth remains unpunctured because most other countries not only have fewer resources, but are even less efficient.

peace, and then toward improved social conditions, and better education and medical care.

We have been trained for a world of scarcity and we have developed an image of man under the psychology of scarcity. The maturation of America and correspondingly of world civilization requires that we begin a program for abundance with a new view of man and his potentialities: neither the inherently weak and sinful puritan nor the self-indulgent consumer, but instead a being whose nature is fulfilled through work that truly engages him, both because it draws upon his creative power and because it gives him the responsibility for helping to decide the form and use of what he makes. In this way we would be able to consider human destructiveness as the manifestation of a thwarted need to create and to initiate—a need thwarted by inadequate education and opportunity (as Paul Goodman has pointed out so forcefully in the pages of this magazine). In *Man for Himself* and later writings, Erich Fromm argues that man does not live merely for the release of tensions (as Freud's writings often suggest), but that when this is all society asks of him, his passive-receptive orientation to life can fill him with a nagging self-doubt—which may in turn be exploited in the fantasies of omnipotence that virulent nationalism demands.

Such an orientation is not basically altered when our educational system—urged on by such men as Admiral Rickover—begins to exchange a progressivism that has never been given a proper chance for a climate of rigor based not on the intractable tasks set both by knowledge and by life, but by a need to keep up with the Russians. One of the most profound lessons a child learns in school is how he is to feel about his later life-work, and if he is taught to approach the idea of work only with a sense of duty, competitiveness, and fear of failure, he will never develop the capacity to impose meaning on whatever tasks he comes to undertake.*

Unwilling to acknowledge that a competition is being forced on us.

THE problems, political and technical, of reorganizing work along lines we can now only dimly envisage, are so enormous as to be almost inhibiting. If one ponders on these matters, one finds oneself facing into a new frontier that is neither physically nor politically simple, but that requires as much resourcefulness and tenacity as the older frontiers did. For example, one might consider the changes involved if every job in America were re-analyzed, not with an eye only to its efficiency in terms of traditional output, but in terms of its long-run effect on the worker, his family, his friends, and his political life. We now assume that production will go on as usual, and that humane progress demands only ancillary adjustments, fringe benefits, which repair some of the ravages of work, on the one hand by making the work place less physically exhausting and despotic, and on the other by trying to shore up the leisure life of the worker with a variety of welfare meas-

* Of course, many people today will say that while they may not be "mad" about their work, neither do they mind it. In *The Lonely Crowd*, the senior author took a sanguine view of the attenuation of "meaning" in work, arguing that in an affluent society, arduous and demanding work would become increasingly unnecessary, and that the productive impulse would have to be expressed in leisure and play. Further reflection has convinced us that here we are not necessarily the prisoners of our technological fate, of our given forms of mass production and of the organization of work. We now believe that a rich, heavily automated society is precisely one that can afford to reorganize work so that attention is focused no longer exclusively on the product, but on the worker himself as a product of his work. We have been greatly excited and impressed by a few pioneering examples, like Edwin Land's Polaroid factory. There, deep involvement in work and a concept of the factory that continues the process of education for the workers, have significantly enlivened many workers (without any loss in productivity when measured by the traditional standards of the balance sheet, although this must not be the sole or even the crucial measure of success). To be creative in leisure while mindless and passive in work demands a schizoid attitude which even if psychologically possible would put too great a burden on leisure, just as the family bears too great a burden when it becomes the only reservoir of decency in a disordered civic and national life.

ures. It is difficult to change this pattern, even if management is willing to initiate the attempt. Edwin Land has found that workers in his Polaroid factory are not eager to leave the assembly line, to whose routines they have become accustomed, for an unspecified job in a laboratory. They doubt their ability to cope with a larger untried situation, just as some students prefer rigid routines, which give them the assurance they are learning something, to less predictable programs of self-directed study. In Dr. Land's experience, workers, like students, need support and encouragement to attempt new tasks.

Another example of inertia is provided by Professor Chris Argyris of the Yale Department of Industrial Administration. The president of a small corporation, Argyris reports, decided that all foremen should determine their own rates of reimbursement. One day he announced that there was a payroll of so many dollars to which he would add an annual increment, and that the workers should divide it among themselves as seemed equitable to them. At first, they jumped at the chance, but not long after they asked to be relieved of the responsibility. The president, however, did not give up. It took him seven years to create a work milieu in which the foremen could develop respect for themselves and one another. In the course of making his innovations, the president discovered how deep were the feelings of alienation, of separateness, and how low was the sense of self-esteem among the foremen. He found also that these feelings could not be changed by propaganda, that such persuasion merely increased self-hate and alienation. The foremen preferred paternalism until they had developed a confidence in themselves based on an altered work situation in which they made decisions about style and methods of production. And the president was secure enough not to feel that he had to hang on to traditional prerogatives; as the workers took over more activities, he was freed for new ones.

WHEN in discussion we have stressed hopeful illustrations like these as models for social change, we have sometimes found them quickly dismissed by people brought up in the shadow of Marxism. Such people believe that the coming of abundance does not change the vested interests, and that political commitments will continue to reflect economic advantage.* They look to what is left of the American disinherited as the potential cadre to displace the power elite, and they see hostility rather than hope as the principal lever of political change; therefore, they do not even try to move men by rational appeals. One might ask whether they are in fact good Marxists. However, one need not be entirely theoretical: recent student rallies for Negro rights and for disarmament suggest that, among the young at least, it is not the underprivileged who are most concerned about justice and about the future. Even the hangovers of scarcity psychology—for example, the prevalent notion that, even if there should be enough of the good *things* of life for all, there would always remain a short supply of status—do not alter the fact that those who worry least about having enough (including enough status) frequently show the clearest sense of responsibility.

As higher education expands and as blue-collar work gives way to white-collar work, the often denigrated bourgeois idealist, the pilot fish of the Marxian theory of revolution, becomes a member of a class quite as large in number as the factory workers. This group is only residually a

* There is no question that there are vested interests in armaments and against radical innovation in nearly all our industries. However, Americans differ from perhaps any other people in that all accept a classless ideology. The weapons makers in America are not evil plotters, who cynically take the risks for the gain. Rather, they often consider themselves "realistic idealists" and are usually men of good will, whose economic advantage makes it easier for them to rationalize by putting full blame on the Russians and by parading the horrors of Communism: in effect, they want the debate to remain polarized and the proponents of pacifism to seem religious oddballs.

"class" in the traditional sense, for it lacks any sense of identity of interest and any large reservoir of hatred or of solidarity. Unlike the well-to-do of other times, it is not supported by servants—indeed, its lack of the habit of command is one of its present political weaknesses. On the whole, its members, children of the industrial revolution, have thought that any increase in productivity automatically spells progress; but today this has become a tarnished belief, and little as yet exists to take its place. The "answer" for which many radicals look is the highly unlikely prospect of another depression. But another depression would at the very best bring us another New Deal, and the New Deal was not good enough in its day, let alone in our era of potential abundance. In any case, as we have said, the threat of war would seem to be catastrophic enough to arouse radical commitment to a utopian future.

TO SUMMARIZE OUR argument: many Americans think that the only changes needed in our national life are minor ones, or choices between starkly stated alternatives. In this, they are like patients who come to a psychiatrist and say, "There is nothing basically the matter with me except that I have this ulcer." So it is with the ulcer of the cold war which exposes the failure of a style of life. Though the immediate peril demands the beginning of disarmament as the first step toward ending the cold war, in doing this, we only patch a symptom. Disarmament is not the end of therapy, and true peace is not merely the absence of war but a state in which the quality of existence becomes humane and generous rather than destructive.

The analogy goes further. Just as no therapist can cure anyone but merely provides the support for another's steps toward health, so our leadership cannot manipulate us into utopia. In order for us to live with our abundance there must

be greater participation in the political life of the United States and of the world. The traditional American ideology which is concerned only with equality of economic and political opportunity and freedom from control—in other words with the major problems of scarcity alone—must re-adjust to face the problems that have suddenly become visible because of abundance: lack of participation in life and lack of opportunity and education for self-expression. Once these problems can be faced, a people of plenty may be able to use its power for helping other people toward economic prosperity—as an essential step toward further difficult alternatives.

When we can overcome our embarrassment at being frankly idealistic in our actions, we will no longer be slaves to an ideology that demands the continual creation of pseudo-needs as a basis for production and continued "prosperity," an ideology which leads the American people to doubt the possibility of any growth beyond comfortable survival, protecting the nest egg. Our imagination must focus on other frontiers, work at bringing more people into participation by forming many small groups, by decentralizing industry, by creating better means for continued education not merely for children but for adults throughout life. To be sure, none of the problems of scarcity has been dealt with in a wholly satisfactory way: not all Americans are affluent, many are destitute, and many of the traditional issues of welfare and social justice—markedly, of course, the race issue—remain exigent. But a movement of renewal dedicated only to these issues is not conceivable. We shall move faster on these older fronts if they do not usurp all our attention and if we can invent an American future which is exciting, active, and responsible, but neither murderous nor imperialistic. It is for this that political programs are needed which transcend the details of the present.

No "Russian problem" at all!